

APPLICATION OF
THE HANDWORK SCHOOL, LLC
D/B/A MAKE-MODERN
1985 BOSTON POST ROAD

AUGUST 6, 2020

NARRATIVE

The Applicant is a tenant in the former Puritan Stationary space at 1985 Boston Post Road. The Applicant requests a special permit to allow it to conduct its craft workshop classes, with incidental sales of craft supplies. This use is allowed in the Neighborhood Business Zone by special permit as a personal service use.

The subject site is on the northeast corner of Boston Post Road and Noroton Avenue. The entire site consists of 0.6456± acre of land, a single-story building containing four tenants, and a smaller, single-story building containing one tenant. The site includes a parking lot containing 27 marked parking spaces in the eastern portion of the site, and approximately eight spaces behind the building.

The Applicant's 1,304± square foot space is at the west end of the larger building. Entrance to the space is through a main entrance at the southwest corner of the building, and a service entrance is located at the northern end of the space. The other tenants and their respective floor areas are listed in the table below.

Tenant	Address	Floor Area (s.f.)
Darien Shoe Repair	1959 Boston Post Road	335
Larger Building:		
Papa Joe's Restaurant Italiano	1973 Boston Post Road	4,085
Papa Joe's Restaurant Italiano	1973 Boston Post Road	1,300
Fancy Nails & Spa	1979 Boston Post Road	1,408
Carmella's Deli	1981 Boston Post Road	1,420
Make-Modern	1985 Boston Post Road	1,304
Total Floor Area		<u>9,517</u> <u>9,852</u>

The original building was built prior to 1934, and the portion of the building now occupied by Papa Joe's was built much later, probably around 1950. It appears that the site has been legally nonconforming since the adoption of off-street parking requirements.

The Applicant holds small workshop classes for children, teens and adults. During the classes, instructors teach basic sewing and jewelry for children, lettering and bullet journaling for teens, and needlepoint, beading, lettering and sewing for adults. Class size is typically up to 15 persons and one instructor. Most workshops are 90 minutes long. The Applicant also holds private birthday workshops for children occasionally on weekends. Schedules for the regular school year and summer season are attached.

The Applicant also offers a mobile classroom in a converted Airstream trailer. The trailer is stored off-site, and is available for events and private parties at outside venues. The trailer will not be parked at the site, except for an occasional few minutes to replenish supplies.

The Applicant previously was located at 22 Grove Street, where it conducted similar workshop classes under the name "The Handwork School, LLC." After the lease at Grove Street expired, the Applicant moved to the current location.

The most recent zoning approvals for the site occurred in 2014, 2019 and 2020. In 2014, the Zoning Board of Appeals (Cal. No. 24-2014) and the Planning and Zoning Commission (Business Site Plan #218-A/Special Permit) approved the expansion of Papa Joe's into space previously occupied by a frame shop. Those approvals allowed the expansion without adding off-street parking spaces. In 2019, the Planning and Zoning Commission moved the boundary between the NB Zone and the R-1/3 Residence Zone from inside the subject property to the northern boundary of the site, so that the entire site is now in the NB Zone. In 2020, the Planning and Zoning Commission (Special Permit #310) approved the use of the small building on the site for Darien Shoe Repair.

PARKING

The parking required for the proposed use and the previous retail stationary story are the same, i.e., one space per 200 square feet of floor area. Under the Applicant's lease, the parking lot is for common use by all of the tenants on the site. Overflow parking is available on Boston Post Road, and on an informal basis in neighboring parking lots, which is the case with Papa Joe's. Overflow parking is also available on an informal basis in the parking lot at Norton Presbyterian Church.

The Applicant's business involves scheduled classes during the day, and one class during the evening. Children attending daytime classes typically are dropped off, resulting in brief parking needs.

To avoid parking issues, the Applicant has designed its schedule so that classes are not scheduled when all of the other uses in the building are at their busiest. The schedules for the school year and summer are attached.

The Applicant does not expect the parking demand to exceed the available on-site and nearby off-site parking supply.

The Applicant's use of its new space will complement the existing business uses in Noroton, and will not be detrimental to the surrounding residential area.